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ABSTRACT

This two-part document contains a description of a peer counseling program affiliated with a college counseling center and a brief outline of their peer counselor training procedures. The program was established to meet the counseling needs of students who tend to be alienated from more traditional sources of help. The responsibilities of the peer counselors, on an outreach basis, are to acquaint students with the services in the Counseling Center, make appropriate referrals, provide the Counseling Center with the information necessary to facilitate change and better serve the needs of the student body, and to reach students in their day-to-day living problems through a preventative model. Counselor training consists of learning basic counseling skills, information skills, assessment skills, and referral skills. (Author/LKP)

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PEER COUNSELOR PROGRAM, 1972-1973

Sponsors: University of California, Santa Barbara, Counseling Center Staff

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Peer Program: Historical Introduction

The use of students as nonprofessional peer counselors at the University of California, Santa Barbara, had its beginnings during the Winter Quarter of the 1970-1971 academic year under the direction of Mr. John Meengs of the Counseling Center. The program was established to meet the counseling needs of students who tend to be alienated from more traditional resources of help. One of the primary objectives of the program was "to work with students to establish a liaison between various student groups and the Counseling Center" (Meengs, 1970). Participating peer counselors had a two-fold responsibility: "First, from an established position of trust in his own peer group, he would acquaint students he contacted with the services available in the Counseling Center and make appropriate referrals to this or other agencies. Secondly, he would return to the Counseling Center information necessary to facilitate change and better serve the needs of the student body" (Meengs, 1970). Finally, it was thought that student peer counselors or student para-professionals could provide important back-up and support services to the professional staff.

In its beginning year eight students were selected and paid to work 10 hours per week. Four men and four women were hired: a Black male and female and a Chicano male and female as well as four Anglo students. Because of budgetary cutbacks, only six student peers were hired for the 1971-1972 academic year. Four minority and two Anglo students were selected, three of whom were peer counselors the year before. During its initial year and a half the peer program initiated many projects. The peer counselors established drop-in hours at the then Isla Vista Counseling Center, helped form a Black Consciousness Raising group, consulted with some of the Resident

Assistants in the dormitories, gathered appropriate referral information, and in general attempted to carry fourth their liaison mission. The first year the peer counselors had contact with 600 students, individually or in groups, and in 1971-1972 had contact with approximately [illegible]00 students.

1972-1973 Peer Counselor Program

In August, 1972, Dr. Herbert [illegible]. Gravitz assumed the role of Coordinator of Peer Counseling. Mr. Ernest Woods, Jr., Coordinator of Minority Student Counseling, served as advisor and co-trainer for peer counseling. While the overall mission of the Peer Counseling Program is still to extend the delivery of counseling services to students, the program is an outgrowth of the Counseling Center's attempts to respond to a broader conception of service--one oriented more toward reaching students in their day-to-day problems with living rather than serving what are typically termed "mental health needs," i.e., symptom removal, changing character styles, or re-structuring personality. This broader conception of service recognizes the importance of levels of prevention other than the more traditional one of treatment after the onset of disorder (i.e., tertiary prevention).

Two other levels of prevention are becoming increasingly more important on college campuses as attention is being paid to utilizing para-professionals. As the Task Force on Para-professionals at the Counseling Center Director's Conference in Louisville, Kentucy (1970) states, "An implied function of the Counseling Center is the fostering of a growth-promoting psychological climate for all members of the university community. Implementation . . . necessitates identification, training, and consultation with a number of persons who have not necessarily had prior professional training in counseling, but who do perform therapeutic functions in the course of their daily experiences." Making the environment more conducive to

mental health needs is the focus of primary prevention, while secondary prevention deals with the early detection and recognition of problems. Primary and secondary prevention (or the "ecological perspective" as outlined by Banning, 1973, and others), as applied to the university community, is most concerned with the transaction between the student and the university environment--not on a particular student's psychopathology or "sickness." The Peer Counseling Program, therefore, is not merely an expedient response to the professional manpower shortage (which it certainly helps to alleviate) but an outgrowth of the different conceptions of service on the part of the Counseling Center as a whole, one recognizing the importance of primary and secondary prevention (cf. Isla Vista's Human Relations Center). While the peer program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, began as an ever evolving experiment in service delivery, it has become an important and integral part of the services offered by the Counseling Center. Its identity, visibility, and credibility have grown as it has strengthened its training program, increased its service offerings, and attracted more students.

The peer counselors are undergraduate students whose selection is predicated by their representation of various ethnic groups on campus. This recognizes that students from different cultural backgrounds might feel more comfortable with students from similar backgrounds. The peer counselors are concerned students who have credibility within their own ethnic groups, who are selected and trained by Counseling Center staff, and who are available to other students for rapping, general information, or referrals to campus or non-campus agencies. The peer counselors are not professional counselors or psychotherapists, but students with a special interest in helping other students (Witt, 1972). The Peer Counseling Program is an effort to affiliate more students with the Counseling Center as well as other student helping

services. In this liaison capacity the peer counselors can reach pockets of students that ordinarily would not be possible by non-student staff members of the Student Services division.

Recruitment for the peer counselors began in late September, 1972. Funds were available for eight student peers to work 40 hours per month, at least eight hours of which are for training. While recruitment was not done by public advertisement, various departments and administrators (e.g., those associated with Asian, Black and Chicano Studies) were contacted and asked to refer potential applicants to the Counseling Center. Each applicant was first individually interviewed by Center staff. A large group interview was also utilized in which the professional staff had the opportunity to see each of the applicants react and interact with each other. From this selection process, seven students were selected as peer counselors; there was one returning peer from the year before. The peer counselors include one Black male and female, one Chicano male and female, and one Anglo male and female, and for the first time, one Asian-American male and female.

The peer counselors have continued to work in a variety of settings while performing many job functions. Much of their initial time is spent "in the field," i.e., in minority and cultural study centers, in student organizational settings, in informal gathering places, or in residence halls--wherever they could serve, do consultative and preventative work, provide counsel, and in general become better known and trusted by the student community. The "field" could be the University Center (UCen), the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), a campus dormitory, under a tree or even in a pool hall--wherever students could find and identify sources of local counsel in their everyday living space. In addition to helping students with their academic, personal, and social lives, the peer counselors seek to help

students be aware of an understand how the various units of the university fit together and how they can be used to make the students' educational stay at this university more successful and satisfying. The peer counselors also work out of the Counseling Center where, under close supervision, they assist with drop-in counseling or see students who might not ordinarily come to the Counseling Center.

The Peer Counseling Program has the built-in assumption of job responsibility: in conjunction with the professional staff, the individual peer develops his or her own job description and job function. The peers provide informal, sustaining relationships to their fellow students and no doubt serve as effective models for self-help and institutional change.

Peer Program: Training and Supervision

As can be seen, different peers necessarily work in different places, performing different functions. A common denominator of the Peer Program, therefore, is not so much job function as it is job training. One of the hallmarks of the current program is the extensive professional training and supervision the peer counselors receive. At least 30 percent of their workload is reserved solely for training. While overall goals of training are always difficult to articulate, two goals stand out. First, to increase the peer counselor's skills as a good listener; to increase his or her abilities; to establish open, honest relationships so that the students he or she works with feel understood and accepted; and to know how to make constructive interventions when necessary, be they to refer a student to the Counseling Center, L. & S., financial aid, or just rap. Second is the assumption that the best way to learn the growth process is to enter the experience itself. Consequently, different modes of training are employed. There is the didactic-lecture-seminar mode as well as the personal-experiential mode. Training occurs not only in weekly, two hour seminars, two weekend encounter groups,

and direct one-on-one supervision from Counseling Center staff, but through the course of the peers' own experiences with their fellow students as well.

The initial outline of the training program (see Appendix I) describes some of the philosophy and substantive issues stressed. Training began with the establishment by the peers of their own code of ethical standards. It stresses that as representatives of the University of California at Santa Barbara the peer counselor should strive at all times to maintain the highest standards in the services he offers. Because the peers intimately touch the lives of others, they bear a heavy social responsibility of which they should be aware. The peer should not use his affiliation with the Counseling Center to promote his self-interests; he should not exploit fellow students for his own benefit; he should know and recognize the limits of his competence; he should regard as confidential any information he obtains; and he should always ask for help from the professional staff when he is uncertain. Ethical issues dealing with conflict of interests and with internal conflicts were incorporated as the year progressed and as more experiences accumulated.

Since helping or counseling can be for better or for worse (Carkhuff, 1969), a great deal of time is spent on learning how <u>not</u> to harm clients. Examples of harm to clients include overinterpretation, minimizing or maximizing a client's concerns, flooding the client with too much information (regardless of how accurate such information may be), overprotectiveness, or simply not respecting a client's rights by pressuring him to look at or act on behaviors he is not ready or able to deal with effectively. Concomitantly the peers explore ways of genuinely supporting their clients in times of stress. As the peers learn about the resources within the Counseling Center and other on - and off - campus resources, they are taught basic skills in making referrals. Emphasis is given on when, how, and where to make referrals.

With some students, for example, it is necessary literally to take them by the hand and bring them to a helping agent. Invariably all campus agencies have been eager to provide the peers with any information and assistance they needed. The academic advisors for the College of Letters and Science, for example, conducted a two-day workshop for the peers to better acquaint them with their services.

Didactic sessions are held which focus upon basic concepts of disordered behavior. There are discussions on the psychoses, the neuroses, and the personality disorders to provide the peers with a working vocabulary of the area. Popular myths and misconceptions about people are explored (see Appendix II) and exploded to provide the peers with a more pragmatic knowledge of bais psychopathology. Other specific content areas are explored including the non-medical use of drugs, sexuality, depression and loneliness, suicide, and the alienated student. Supplemental readings are also recommended to the peers. Carl Rogers' On Becoming a Person (1961) is especially recommended. Other books include the LeDain Commission Study (1970), Bernard Guerney's (1969) book on para-professionals, Toffler's Future Shock (1970), Hannah Green's I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (1964), and Kramer's (1970) manual on beginning counseling contact. Other Counseling Center staff provide the peers with additional books and references on various subjects in which they have mutual interests. While these books are not assigned, the peers read many of them and find them highly useful and stimulating.

Active listening as well as relationship skills are taught to the peers via the Robert Carkhuff (1969) model. Since his model provides much of the content of the clinical-counseling theory, a brief description of his theory is presented. Carkhuff (1971) provides empirical validity that the

relationship between the helper (i.e., the peer counselor) and the helpee (i.e., his counselee) constitutes the core of all effective learning or relearning experiences. This relationship can be operationalized in terms of the level of communication of certain conditions between helper and helpee. Carkhuff terms these conditions the facilitative or responsive dimensions and the action-oriented or initiative dimensions of helping. Together, these facilitative and initative dimensions involve the helpee in a process of constructive change or growth.

The facilitative dimensions include the communication of empathy, understanding, respect, and specificity or concreteness. The degree to which the helper can offer high levels of these facilitative dimensions will be related directly to the degree to which the helpee can understand, respect, and be specific with himself and his environment. The action-oriented dimensions on the other hand include such dimensions as genuineness (being real), confrontation (telling it like it is) and immediacy (what is going between helpee and helper). The degree to which the helper can offer high levels of these action-oriented dimensions will be related directly to the degree to which the helpee can confront, be genuine, and immediate with himself and his environment. Appendices III and IV provide a more complete review of these training materials.

The further removed any mode of learning applied skills and theory becomes from the experience of what is being thought, the less likely the lasting significance of its contribution (Carkhuff, 1971). Experiential meaning as well as empirical validity must co-exist in any effective training program. Hence, much of the peer counseling training, particularly the Carkhuff aspects, is done through role-playing and psycho-drama. Through role-playing the peers learn to discriminate between what a person says

(i.e., the content of his communication) and what a person means (i.e., the process of his communication). The peers role-play numerous interactions, always with the intent of understanding the subtleties of the communication process more clearly.

The peers participated in two encounter weekend workshops led by the Coordinator and his Advisor. Not only did this provide a vehicle in which the peers could learn more about themselves and their other peers, but the workshops provide an opportunity for the peers to learn and share in an examination of their own needs, processes, and behavior.

In addition the peers have the opportunity to consult with and be supervised by other Counseling Center staff. Each peer observes different members of the professional staff in their daily job functioning. They sit in on drop-ins with the staff and spend numerous hours talking about issues which emerge from their peer counselor's role. It is in these often individual supervisory sessions that the peers acquire a lot of their job specific training. For example, some of the peers are involved in group work and they are supervised separately by professional staff members.

Peer Program: Statistical Report (Fall and Winter Quarters Only)

A brief introductory note should be given about the statistical presentation of the Peer Program. It is impossible to capture the flavor or process of the peers' interactions with their fellow students by concentrating on quantitative variables to the exclusion of qualitative ones. Consequently the peer statistics are presented in two parts. First, there is a qualitative presentation, that is, a discussion of the kinds of problems and activities in which the peers engaged. Second, there is a quantitative presentation summarizing the numbers and types of contacts made.

A list of problems typically occurring in counseling and helping (see

Appendix V) was given to the peers in order to determine the kinds of problems they were encountering. They were asked to rank order the five most frequent problems as well as to rank the five least frequent problems they dealt with as peer counselors. An analysis of their lists indicates remarkable similarities across peers, both in terms of the most frequent and least frequent problems listed. Six problem areas emerged as most frequent and are as follows: first, problems relating to persons of the opposite sex; second, academic problems, e.g., difficulties with studying or no motivation; third, loneliness; fourth, dropping out of school; fifth, problems with depression; and sixth, problems with family. This indicates that not only do the peers aid other students in personal-social areas but also those areas vital to a successful academic career as well. The six least frequent problem areas they encountered were military problems, homosexuality, religious problems, suicide, sexual performance problems, and drug problems, e.g., a bad trip. It is interesting to note, however, that problems involving drug dependency occurred more frequently.

The peers spent countless hours gathering information for referrals and solidifying their trust and credibility with consultations to other student services, groups, and organizations on and off campus that deal with students. Some of them include: The Asian Alliance, The Black Cultural Committee, The Black Student Union, The Cafe Interim, The Chicano peer counselors, Santa Barbara County Mental Health, The Freedom Clinic, The Huelga Committee, La Raza Libre, the Lompoc Prison peer counselors, the Isla Vista Human Relations Center, the Isla Vista Open Door Clinic, LEG Council, MeCHa, Planned Parenthood, Reading Study Center, residence hall staffs, and the Veterans Organization.

The peers continued to involve themselves in group work. For the second

year in a row, the Black peers together with Mr. Ernest Woods of the Counseling Center led a Black Consciousness Raising group. An Asian-American Consciousness group was established on this campus for the first time under the leadership of the Asian-American peers and Mr. John Ota, the Asian-American consultant. Mr. Ota's salary was paid for by the Assistants to the Chancellor for Minority Affairs. So many students were interested that a second Asian-American group had to be formed. One of the peers, on a referral from a Counseling Center staff member, leads a group in one of the fraternities under the supervision of another staff member. One of the more gratifying experiences the peers had occurred when they were asked by George Smith, Vice-Chancellor of Student Services and Isla Vista Affairs, and Derry Bowles, Chief of the Campus Security force, to help select Community Service Officers. Four peers became involved and spent over 40 hours in selection meetings. For the first time the peer counselors established limited afternoon drop-in hours in the main Counseling Center. Not only did students now come to the Counseling Center to see a peer counselor but the Center staff referred some students to the peers while the peers referred many students to staff members. Some of these students might never have seen a professional counselor without such a referral.

Like the quantitative statistics for the Counseling Center, the statistics for the Peer Program are presented in contact units. Each contact unit represents an interaction between student(s) and peer counselor(s). The duration of this interaction varied from three minutes to three hours. If one student is involved, the interaction is expressed in terms of individual contact units. If more than one student is involved, the interaction is expressed in terms of group contact units. All statistics are presented in operational form, i.e., each statistic is measured or defined by the operations or procedures used to obtain that statistic. Because of the newness of the current

program, detailed statistics were not available for all statistical categories. Consequently, some estimates had to be made. When estamates were needed, the error factor was invariably on the conservative side. Hence, it is probable that the true statistics in these cases could be as much as ten percent higher. It is also important to note the following statistical summary is for Fall and Winter Quarters only. During the Spring Quarter the peers continued their student contacts, making approximately one third more the number of contacts in each category. Their remaining time was spent interviewing and selecting the 1973-1974 Counseling Center peer counselors. About 35 interviews were conducted.

The following table summarizes the quantitative aspect of the peer statistics.

I.	Total number of contacts (i.e., the sum of all individual contacts plus group contacts plus initial contacts or the sum of A + B + C + D)	4,259
	A. Total initial individual contacts (i.e., the sum of all first individual contacts or the number of students seen at least one time)	1,245
	B. Total repeat individual contacts (i.e., the sum of all individual contacts <u>after</u> the initial contact)	546
	C. Total initial group contacts (i.e., the sum of all first group contacts or the number of students seen at least one time in a group situation)	592
	D. Total repeat group contacts (i.e., the sum of all group contacts <u>after</u> the initial contact)	1,876
II.	Total number of students serviced (i.e., the sum of A and C above)	1,837
III.	Total number of F.T.E. (i.e., the sum of the percentage of work time by 8 peer counselors)	1.84
IV.	F.T.E.: Individual (i.e., the ratio of individuals seen to F.T.E.)	1.84 : 1837
V.	F.T.E.: Enrollment (i.e., the ratio of student enrollment to F.T.E.)	1.84 : 12240
VI.	Contacts: Enrollment (i.e., the ratio of total contacts by peers to student enrollment)	4259 : 12240

Even the above quantitative statistics have an important qualitative aspect. Perhaps an example of one individual contact unit can illustrate its nature. One of the peers was working out of the EOP office when she noticed a student who was obviously distressed and confused. On inquiry, it was discovered that the student never received a check before and had little idea of how to organize and plan ahead in financial matters. The intervention of the peer consisted of helping this student open a bank account (the student had never been in a bank before!) and a lesson in money management.

As impressive as the above statistics may be, they tell only a part of the story of the 1972-1973 peer counselors and the Counseling Center staff who helped train them. What these statistics could not capture is the coming together of ten separate and unique people united by their task of extending service to those who might not ordinarily receive it. These ten people, despite their different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, worked together as a cooperative and cohesive unit, sharing the good moments with the bad. The statistics also cannot capture the remarkable spirit of cooperation and mutual respect between the entire Counseling Center staff and the peers. Center staff spent numerous hours teaching, supervising, and sharing with the peers. Without the support and encouragement of the Center staff, the Peer Program could not have functioned as it has.

In summary, if the amount of learning and growth that occurred in the peers themselves is reflective of the learning and growth that occurred between the peers and their fellow students, then I strongly believe the peer counselors made a difference on this campus. Our qualitative and quantitative data make it quite clear that the Peer Counseling Program of the University of California at Santa Barbara Counseling Center has had broad and preventative import on campus so far. Its potential depends on the

continuing support from the administration and the Counseling Center staff.

Submitted by

Herbert L. Gravitz, Ph.D.
Assistant Director and Coordinator
Peer Counseling Program

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PEER COUNSELING TRAINING OUTLINE

TO: 1973-74 Peer Counselors

FROM: Herbert Gravitz, Coordinator of Peer Counseling

RE: Peer Counselor Tentative Training Schedule

(Note: This is indeed a tentative schedule of some of the helping skills we will try to learn this year. But this training outline comes from my head and doesn't have your imput yet. You're going to find that some areas and some skills are more important to you than others. It will be your right as well as your responsibility to modify this schedule as it can relate more meaningfully to how you function as a peer counselor.)

Philosophy of Training Program

A. The Counseling Center Staff and I believe we can teach you just as we believe you can teach us. Simply, that's a philosophy of training: we teach each other, recognizing that we each already have special skills and knowledge.

   1. If we can't teach each other, then that says something about each of us as well as our program.

   2. Because we teach each other, each of us will probably be responsible for parts of the training. Likely, each of us will lead or co-lead some training sessions.

B. The atmosphere we establish in our training seminars is critical! I'd like to set as a goal an atmosphere in our training of freedom, expression, individuality, a tolerance of ambiguity, and a tolerance for honest mistakes.

C. Primary emphasis of training: basic counseling skills, information skills, and assessment skills, not intensive psychotherapy. We're not here to reconstruct someone's personality but we'll see a reorientation of attitudes and feelings in the students we work with.

D. Training could involve up to 100 hours over the year or 30% of the program. The first quarter will be the heaviest in terms of training.

E...Z Peers input to philosophy of training. Your input will be highly valued.

What follows is a training guide by quarter. How much of it we actually do depends on one thing -- us.

A. Fall Quarter

First of all, this will be a time to get to know each other. Besides the multitude of our different ethnic backgrounds, we each have different personalities, different life-styles, different values and needs, and a list of other differences. The better we work as a team, the better our program will be and the more meaningful it will be for you. As we learn more about each other, we will learn more about ourselves too.

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This will be a time for all of us to try to understand the needs of the students we represent. What are some of the major difficulties which confront students at UCSB? Is lonliness and alienation a major issue? Is sex, drugs, academics, finances, ignorance a major issue? ALL of us come in contact with many students and all from different views(eyes). We can teach each other a great deal here.

This will be a time to learn of the resources of our campus and the community. We need information skills. The following are some of the places we may want to know about:

1. College of Letters and Sciences
2. EOP and Financial Aid
3. Placement
4. Dean of Students Office
5. Special Services Program
6. Human Relations Center
7. Women's Center
8. Legal Collective
9. County Mental Health
10. Department of Welfare

This will be a time to learn basic referral skills -- e.g., when to make a referral to an agency-where, how and why.

This will be a time to establish the code of ethics under which we will operate. We'll need to discuss the following:

1. Confidentiality
2. Conflicts of interests
3. Internal conflict
4. Sexuality
5. Aggression
6. The APA Code of Ethics for Psychologists
7. Finally, our emerging code of ethics as established by the peers themselves.

This will be a time to begin to acquire basic concepts of listening and communication skills as well as basic diagnostic skills. Here it will be especially important to distinguish between the content of what a person is saying and the process of what a person is saying -- in other words, to distinguish between the words and the music of the communication process.

This will be a time to learn how NOT to harm the students you work with. Research does show that helping can be for better or for worse. Some people actually deteriorate as a result of "helping". We'll discuss those ways in which a helping intervention can be harmful, e.g., over interpreting (even if your interpretation is correct), opening someone up too much, minimizing or maximizing a student's concern, overprotective, "red-crossing", etc.

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Finally, this will be a time to develop our identities as peer counselors. Most of you have only a vague idea of what it means to be a peer counselor. It's hard to know always what a peer counselor does, because the role of the peer counselor is ever-evolving. Now, this sounds like an incredible amount to learn in one quarter, but these content areas will most certainly extend into the second and third quarters.

B. Winter Quarter

By the second quarter your role as a peer counselor will make some sense to you. Something may click and you'll say, "yea, I AM a peer counselor and I even know what that means!" You'll get it together.

This will be a time to develop more fully your skills in listening, hearing, and responding to someone who is seeking your help.

This will be a time to learn more about clinical theories of helping. Our emphasis will focus on such people as Carl Rogers and Robert Carkhuff. Carkhuff describes structured exercises to increase helping skills and we'll become familiar with them. We'll be doing a lot of role-playing and role reversals.

This will be a time to learn some basic group skills.

Most importantly, this will be the quarter where we each will talk about the kinds of things we're doing as a peer counselor. We'll have the chance to share our feelings about this job with each other, our frustrations, mistakes and our successes. We'll learn more clearly what each other does as a helper.

C. Spring Quarter

Hopefully, this will be our finest quarter. This will be the time when we coordinate and integrate the skills of the first two quarters. We'll learn more about group skills, continue to share our work and our skills, and hopefully have some time to relax with each other. If we want we can look at all kinds of areas in the helping field. We might want to know what other para-professionals are into. We might want specific workshops on suicide, crisis intervention, drugs, sexuality, or whatever. We might also like to see what people regard as good attitudes of a helper or the importance of personal growth of the helper.

Somewhere in the midst of all this, we'll plan time to talk about those aspects of your work which are especially important to you. Each of us will be doing different things and using different skills. We'll really be teaching each other -- and others -- now.

HLG/a
1/15/74

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This will be a time for all of us to try to understand the needs of the students we represent. What are some of the major difficulties which confront students at UCSB? Is lonliness and alienation a major issue? Is sex, drugs, academics, finances, ignorance a major issue? ALL of us come in contact with many students and all from different views(eyes). We can teach each other a great deal here.

This will be a time to learn of the resources of our campus and the community. We need information skills. The following are some of the places we may want to know about:

1. College of Letters and Sciences
2. EOP and Financial Aid
3. Placement
4. Dean of Students Office
5. Special Services Program
6. Human Relations Center
7. Women's Center
8. Legal Collective
9. County Mental Health
10. Department of Welfare

This will be a time to learn basic referral skills -- e.g., when to make a referral to an agency-where, how and why.

This will be a time to establish the code of ethics under which we will operate. We'll need to discuss the following:

1. Confidentiality
2. Conflicts of interests
3. Internal conflict
4. Sexuality
5. Aggression
6. The APA Code of Ethics for Psychologists
7. Finally, our emerging code of ethics as established by the peers themselves.

This will be a time to begin to acquire basic concepts of listening and communication skills as well as basic diagnostic skills. Here it will be especially important to distinguish between the content of what a person is saying and the process of what a person is saying -- in other words, to distinguish between the words and the music of the communication process.

This will be a time to learn how <u>NOT</u> to harm the students you work with. Research does show that helping can be for better or for worse. Some people actually deteriorate as a result of "helping". We'll discuss those ways in which a helping intervention can be harmful, e.g., over interpreting (even if your interpretation is correct), opening someone up too much, minimizing or maximizing a student's concern, overprotective, "red-crossing", etc.

Finally, this will be a time to develop our identities as peer counselors. Most of you have only a vague idea of what it means to be a peer counselor. It's hard to know always what a peer counselor does, because the role of the peer counselor is ever-evolving. Now, this sounds like an incredible amount to learn in one quarter, but these content areas will most certainly extend into the second and third quarters.

B. Winter Quarter

By the second quarter your role as a peer counselor will make some sense to you. Something may click and you'll say, "yea, I AM a peer counselor and I even know what that means!" You'll get it together.

This will be a time to develop more fully your skills in listening, hearing, and responding to someone who is seeking your help.

This will be a time to learn more about clinical theories of helping. Our emphasis will focus on such people as Carl Rogers and Robert Carkhuff. Carkhuff describes structured exercises to increase helping skills and we'll become familiar with them. We'll be doing a lot of role-playing and role reversals.

This will be a time to learn some basic group skills.

Most importantly, this will be the quarter where we each will talk about the kinds of things we're doing as a peer counselor. We'll have the chance to share our feelings about this job with each other, our frustrations, mistakes and our successes. We'll learn more clearly what each other does as a helper.

C. Spring Quarter

Hopefully, this will be our finest quarter. This will be the time when we coordinate and integrate the skills of the first two quarters. We'll learn more about group skills, continue to share our work and our skills, and hopefully have some time to relax with each other. If we want we can look at all kinds of areas in the helping field. We might want to know what other para-professionals are into. We might want specific workshops on suicide, crisis intervention, drugs, sexuality, or whatever. We might also like to see what people regard as good attitudes of a helper or the importance of personal growth of the helper.

Somewhere in the midst of all this, we'll plan time to talk about those aspects of your work which are especially important to you. Each of us will be doing different things and using different skills. We'll really be teaching each other -- and others -- now.

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